



EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AUTHORITY

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

SUBMITTED BY

KEY2 ED CONSULTANT TEAM

Douglas Little

Dr. Joyce Little

Steven Mark

Dr. Joe Blackburn

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INTRODUCTION

The expressed purpose of this document is to provide direction and recommendations to the Michigan Educational Achievement Authority (EAA) regarding the development and delivery of special education and related services for students with disabilities compliant with current federal, state, and EAA mandates and guidelines. The content of this document forms the foundation for the planning, organization, and implementation of such programs and services for the EAA and at its member schools.

The Key2Ed Consultant Team therefore, to accomplish this task, have focused its recommendations on the following topical areas: Legal Mandates, Organizational Structure, Policy and Procedures, Search and Serve, Programs and Services, Transportation, Assessment & Evaluation, Professional Development, Personnel, Management Information Systems, Finance, Funding & Budget, and the Community at Large.

The recommendations in this document are based on educational Best Practices, the consultant's training and professional education experiences, and from both interviews with EAA stakeholders and an analysis of available relevant documents. Stakeholders interviewed included:

1. Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency [RESA]
2. The Detroit Federation of Teachers
3. The Special Education Administration of the Detroit Public Schools
4. The Legal Counsel for Detroit Public Schools
5. The Director of Special Education for the Michigan Department of Education
6. The Detroit Parents Network/Parent Teacher's Association
7. The Michigan Educational Achievement Authority

It is important to note, that many of the stated recommendations do overlap and therefore, implementation, in some cases, will need to be coordinated so as to bring about the desired outcomes.

In addition, EAA has gathered information from:

- Local and State Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Parent Pride
- Local school community organizations

LEGAL MANDATES/GOVERNANCE/COMPLIANCE/DUE PROCESS

- Federal
- State
- District Governance
- Compliance Monitoring
- Due Process/Dispute Resolution
- Non-District Agency Agreement

The EAA is obligated to serve students with disabilities according to federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines. At this time, the relevant special education laws and procedures are not available in one abridged document, but can be found in several locations.

The following represents a basic listing of laws and policies. All documents are found on the State Department of Education website at the Special Education/Law and Policy location.

Law

- Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education
- IDEA 2004 Federal Regulations
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004
- Implementing Regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Michigan School Code – PA 451 of 1976
- Michigan State School Aid Act – PA 94 of 1979

Policy

- Revised Process of Inclusion of Public School Academies in the Intermediate School District Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services
- Michigan Criteria for Determining the Existence of a Specific Learning Disability
- Intermediate School District Plan Criteria for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services
- Policy for the Appointment of Surrogate Parents for Special Education Services
- Standards for Extended School Year Services in Michigan
- Supporting Student Behavior: Standards for the Emergency Use of Seclusion and Restraint
- Utilization of Noncertified Personnel in Elementary and Secondary Schools

- Updated Process for Clarifications or Modifications of Previously Approved ISD Plans for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA develop and expand their existing policy on serving students with disabilities.
- Policies include, but not be limited to, search and serve, the EAA dispute resolution process, and parent information and participation. (Note: The Detroit Public Schools has somewhat recently had an external consultant prepare a Special Education Handbook that possibly may be, if necessary, updated and customized for the EAA.)
- The EAA appoint an administrator /director of special education to oversee and coordinate with school site administrators, staff, and central office administration to ensure that all mandated cited laws and policies are followed. (Note: The director of special education, with a clear understanding of all of the laws and policies cited above, puts procedures in place to ensure all personnel understand their obligations under the requirements, have adequate resources for compliance, and establishes measures of accountability).
- The EAA form and enter into non-District Agency agreements for some services to students. (Note: This could include preschool, post-secondary services, and some related services, such as speech, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and behavior, as needed to provide a full continuum of services for students with disabilities.)
- The EAA work with Wayne RESA for information regarding access and availability of service providers in the area.
- The EAA enter into a standard agreement with Wayne RESA for support of their special education program and related services.

EAA SPECIAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

CENTRAL OFFICE AND SCHOOL SITES

It is critical in the successful education of students with disabilities that all district administration and staff embrace the concept of serving students with disabilities. Special education programs and related services are most successful when school site administrators are knowledgeable, supportive, and personally involved in their delivery on their campuses with strong central office commitment and support.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA central office staff will include a full time administrator/ director responsible for the coordination, support, and monitoring for compliance of special education and related services.
- The EAA special education administrator/director have a direct line relationship with the EAA Chancellor, with full support for the education of students with disabilities.
- The EAA special education administrator/director have the authority to hold accountable and direct school site administrators in regards to their delivery of special education and related services. (Note: In a site-based organization, there must be consistency from site to site regarding special education practices so as not to create a situation where the district may be deemed out of compliance.)
- The EAA school site administrators be responsible and held accountable for providing Best Practices, as well as, compliant special education and related services on their campuses for students with disabilities.
- The EAA retain the services of an attorney whose practice and professional expertise is in the area of special education with experience in large urban school districts. (NOTE: The Consultant Team has recommended such an attorney for consideration by the EAA.)
- The EAA special education administrator/director collaborate with RESA in providing special education and related services utilizing their support in such areas as professional development, training, access to current special education information, trends, and guidelines, etc.

SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It has been communicated to the Consultant Team, that in Michigan, local education agencies [LEA] have a limited number of policies as relating to special education matters. However, it appears there are adequate policies in place and can be found in numerous documents, guidelines, and bulletins, etc. but are not available in a comprehensive special education policy manual.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA develop a comprehensive document that brings all Laws, Policies and Procedures together to ensure the organization and all employees have an understanding of their responsibilities and obligations
- A representative summary of policies and procedures is contained in the parents' rights and safeguards document which is available from Wayne RESA.

The relevant laws and policies include:

Law

- Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education
- IDEA 2004 Federal Regulations
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004
- Implementing Regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Michigan School Code – PA 451 of 1976
- Michigan State School Aid Act – PA 94 of 1979

Policy

- Revised Process of Inclusion of Public School Academies in the Intermediate School District Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services
- Michigan Criteria for Determining the Existence of a Specific Learning Disability
- Intermediate School District Plan Criteria for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services
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- Utilization of Noncertified Personnel in Elementary and Secondary Schools

SEARCH AND SERVE

Special Education is specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of a child that result from his/her disability and ensures access to the general curriculum. An IEP Team is responsible for offering a set of programs and related services that are designed to meet the student's unique needs, is reasonably calculated to provide educational benefit, and is in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to the maximum extent appropriate.

NOTE: There are several crucial aspects of Search and Serve including Child Identification, Student Study Teams, Referral, Assessment, and Evaluation, Response to Intervention (RTI), Student Overrepresentation (ED/BD and MR Categories), and Underrepresentation (Gifted and Talented), that to be appropriately and compliantly implemented, require ongoing, current, and in depth professional development of all involved staff.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA should develop and implement a comprehensive Child Find Program that includes both unserved students presently not enrolled in the EAA catchment area and for those unserved students presently enrolled.
- The EAA implement a working relationship with appropriate agencies and organizations that serve the 0-3 population, so that there is a seamless provision of services to students with disabilities.
- The EAA mandate a Student Study Team, at each school site, to provide support to teachers as to appropriate classroom accommodations, modifications, interventions, and in some instances, referral for additional assessment, evaluation, and possible special education and/or related services.
- The EAA develop policies and guidelines for suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities so that they are administered in an equitable manner taking into the consideration each students individual needs.
- The EAA implement a district wide consistent referral to placement process consistent with current mandates and regulations.
- The EAA make available all necessary district parent/guardian forms, bulletins, etc. for identified non-English speaking EAA families so that they are able to make informed educational decisions regarding their children (NOTE: When appropriate material translations are not available, then a translator should be provided.)

- The EAA implement a district wide Response To Intervention (RTI) Program, as a component of general education, as an alternative to the traditional referral to placement process for support of at risk learners and for identifying possible students with disabilities.
- The EAA immediately implement a re-evaluation process for African-American males in both ED/BD & MR categories to determine the appropriateness for return to a general education program or if indicated, eligibility for an alternative special education category (i.e. Specific Learning Disability, Other Health Impaired/ADHD), a Section 504 Plan placement). (NOTE: The reassignment to an alternate disability category or serving students under Section 504 could eliminate the overrepresentation of African-American Males in both ED/BD & MR placements. It is important to be aware that there are no federal or state monies provided for students being served by a Section 504 Plan. However, the provision for appropriate accommodations, modifications, and interventions for each student would still be in place.)
- The EAA develop and implement a process for the identification of gifted and talented students.
- The EAA process for identification of gifted students should include a three tier process involving:
 1. Traditional evaluation and standards;
 2. Identification of students who possess artistic talents (i.e. writing, painting, acting, singing, etc.); and
 3. An alternative evaluation method of evaluation and identification of gifted students based on the traditionally low performance of minority students on standardized intelligence scales due to the culturally biased nature of these tests and the instrument's focus on a single aspect of intelligence.

Note: The assessment and evaluation of students who are Gifted & Talented should follow Renzulli's (1997) Three Tiered Model, which includes 1) Above average ability in a talent or intelligence; 2) Creativity; 7& 3) Extensive commitment to tasks and task completion. A student's mastery of concepts, their problem solving skills, and the process they use to decode, store, retrieve, and encode information are also critical factors which set the Gifted & Talented apart from their peers. Any or all of these factors in a variety of combinations would qualify a student as being eligible for identification as Gifted & Talented. Indeed, these factors should form the basis for any initial, informal screening process developed and implemented by the Michigan Educational Achievement Authority. Additionally, screening, assessment, and evaluation processes and procedures should address each individual students' abilities, interests, learning styles, and cultural background.

Screening instruments which address the above features can be informal and developed by the Michigan Educational Achievement Authority. These instruments would be used to initially separate those individuals who would be potentially Gifted & Talented for further, more in depth evaluation. This

in depth evaluation would necessarily include standardized instruments for formal identification of students who are Gifted & Talented. Appropriate instruments for such an in depth evaluation include:

1. *The Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales*
2. *Raven's Progressive Matrices*
3. *The Differential Ability Scale*
4. *The Basic Achievement Skills Inventory*
5. *The Weschler Intelligence Scales*
6. *The Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale*
7. *Clark's Drawing Abilities Test*
8. *The Cognitive Abilities test*
9. *The Dance Talent Assessment Process*
10. *The Gifted & Talented Evaluation Scale*
11. *The Gifted Rating Scales*
12. *The Scales for Rating the Behavior Characteristics of Superior Students*
13. *The Kaufmann Achievement Battery for Children*
14. *The Kaufmann Test of Educational Achievement*
15. *The Music Talent Assessment Process*
16. *The Test of Non-verbal Intelligence*
17. *The Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test*

The Michigan Educational Authority could use any of the above instruments to identify students as Gifted & Talented. It is likely that the Wayne Regional Educational Service Center possesses both the instruments and individuals with the expertise to administer, score, and interpret the results of these instruments. Additionally, the Michigan Educational Achievement Authority, given the demographics of its student population, should be extremely sensitive to any instruments employed in this process as to their "cultural fairness" or any inherent "cultural bias".

References

Renzulli, Joseph S. & Reis, Sally M.: *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model - Second Edition*; Creative Learning Press, Mansfield 1997 (p. 5-14)

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AND SERVICES

Special education and related services are designed to meet the unique needs of an individual student so as to provide meaningful access to general education with the challenges established for all students. In doing this, the expectation is to raise the standards and achievement for students with disabilities, birth (Part C) through age 26.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA provide inclusive special education program and related service options for students with disabilities, in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) with emphasis on delivery of services in the general education classroom, as appropriate and practical, at the home school of the student.
- The EAA, on an ongoing basis, monitor its special education program and related service options to ensure appropriateness, student achievement, and growth using both internal and external mechanisms.
- The EAA mandate and support a Response to Intervention (RTI) system at each school site as a function of the general education program.
- The EAA provide a school curriculum (Common Core) that is aligned with the Michigan State Standards that will meet the needs of all students including at risk and special education inclusion students, with meaningful access to the district's general school curriculum.
- The EAA adopt an universally designed instructional platform that provides for and incorporates a myriad of learning styles, needs of identified language learners, and related student individual differences.
- The EAA consider implementing the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM), which includes both content enhancement (RTI) Tier I Evidenced Based Practices of the General Education Curriculum and Specific Strategy Instruction (RTI) Tier II Evidences Based Practices.
- The EAA plan and provide all related services legally mandated by both federal mandates and regulations as prescribed in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) of students with disabilities.
- The EAA establish caseloads for related services in accordance with federal, state and EAA guidelines.
- The EAA implement a robust program, both functional and academic, to facilitate transition for students with disabilities from school to post-school activities.
- The EAA provide assistive technology, as necessary, for students with disabilities so as to have meaningful access to the general school curriculum.

- The EAA adopt, with assistance of school site staff, a menu of scientific based classroom instructional programs including reading, mathematics, science, etc.
- The EAA adopt a district wide Positive Behavior Management Program mandated for implementation at each school site.
- The EAA collaborate, as appropriate, with mental health agencies and entities, as available, for the assessment and provision of student mental health services for its students.
- The EAA implement both an after school tutorial and homework program in collaboration with appropriate community resources (i.e. Parent Resource Network).
- The EAA implement a peer to peer and an adult mentor/volunteer reading and math intervention tutoring programs (NOTE: HOSTS (Help One Student to Succeed), and Learning Together (Reading Together, and Math Together) are two of several programs that have demonstrated excellent growth for involved students, and have been identified as best practices.).
- The EAA needs to provide an extended school year (ESY) for students with disabilities for whom this is deemed appropriate. This is a requirement of federal law, and is more than just a summer school program for some students.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a related service that an IEP Team is responsible for determining if it is required to assist a student with disabilities to benefit from special education and related services. A student with disabilities may also be eligible for this related service if it is determined that it is necessary for a student to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities in the manner necessary to afford an equal opportunity for participation in these activities to the maximum extent appropriate. Transportation may be provided in a variety of ways (i.e. school bus, taxi cab, parent reimbursement, etc.) Special circumstances may include adapted buses with lifts and/or ramps and bus aides as determined, as necessary.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA formulate a plan and budget for transporting students with disabilities for those students determined eligible by an IEP Team.
- The EAA develop a transportation policy, with guidelines, that ensure students with disabilities have access to the Least Restrictive Environment [LRE] as determined by an IEP Team.
- The EAA look at a transportation study, performed by the transportation provider, to ensure the most efficient and economic routes.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Student assessment is a vital component of the instructional program for students with disabilities and is to be addressed in a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) in accordance with federal and state assessment and evaluation guidelines for students with disabilities.

Evaluation of teaching staff is a legal mandate, and when appropriately implemented, provides an opportunity for staff to evaluate strengths and weakness for ongoing planning and improvement and additionally to observe and validate Best Practices leading to increased student achievement.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA include, in all district annual staff evaluations, goals and objectives related to the area(s) of their responsibility for providing support, services, and/or instruction for students with disabilities.
- The EAA put in place a Management Information System that provides easy access for data necessary for staff to monitor all legal mandates and regulations pertaining to the education of students with disabilities.
- The EAA utilize Student Individual Learning Plans (SILP's) and Individual Education Plans (IEP's) as a benchmark and guide for assessment of students with disabilities.
- The EAA, should provide professional development, for site administrators, in the areas of effective instructional strategies including direct instruction keyed to student's individual needs for teacher evaluations.
- The EAA provide training for central office and site administrators in a collaborative and collegial model of staff evaluation.
- The EAA develop guidelines, site based instructions, and support to ensure that students with disabilities are included in all mandated state and district student assessments, as appropriate.
- The EAA, use as criteria, when adopting instructional programs, that includes a student assessment component.
- The EAA, consider the adoption of a student progress monitoring assessment, aligned with Michigan state standards, which will both guide instruction and provide data for local, state, and federal reporting requirements.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Relevant professional development will constitute the basis of the ongoing efficacy of the EAA, its schools, personnel, and programs. Professional development activities should incorporate a process that encompasses a variety of “Best Practices” to enhance knowledge, skills, and the application of effective pedagogical procedures that result in increasing student achievement.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA implement a professional development program for all central office and school site based staff (including related service providers and paraprofessionals), as appropriate, that is long range, ongoing, targeted, and sequential.
- The EAA ensure that general education and special education teacher/staff are partnered in professional development.
- The EAA collaborate with RESA and the Parent Resource Network to provide staff and parent professional development and training.
- The EAA should consider implementing a professional development process that includes the following elements identified by the National Staff Development Process. They are:
 1. Presentation: This element involves the description of the technique or procedure of interest and any associated processes with example of how the process/procedure can be effectively employed.
 2. Modeling: This element involves the facilitator actually using the process/procedure presented with “real world” materials in a simulated setting (Modeling = do it”).
 3. Practice: This element consists of guided practice in which the facilitator works with the participants and independent practice in which the participants work in a group or individually (guided practice= “We do it”; independent practice= “You do it”).
 4. Corrective Feedback – This element runs across all other elements and involves the facilitator providing participation with information and direction as to the fidelity and integrity in their use of the process/procedure presented.
- The EAA leadership, for Year 1, identify staff professional development activities addressing school efficacy, the achievement of organizational goals/outcomes and that in subsequent years activities be based on teacher/staff and administrator feedback regarding their needs in relation to instruction and leadership.
- The EAA develop a menu of professional development topics including: The EAA’s Vision, Mission, and Philosophy, EAA Policies and Procedures, IEP Process, 504, Special Education 101, RTI, Inclusive Education, Instructional Models and Strategies, Collaborative Teaching, Student

Assessment, Behavior Management, Language Acquisition, Transition, Content Enhancement, Common Core, etc.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FORMS

Special Education forms used by the EAA must be approved by the State Department of Education to ensure they meet all State and Federal requirements. The Wayne County RESA has a comprehensive list of approved forms in English and many in both Spanish and Arabic.

This list includes:

- **Parental Rights and Information**
 - Notice for Initial Provision of Programs and Services
 - Notice for Provision of Programs and Services
 - Procedural Safeguards
 - Parent Organizations
 - Basic Parental Consent
 - Special Education Programs
 - Meeting Invitation
- **Evaluation Related Forms**
 - Referral/Review of Existing Evaluation Data/Consent
 - Instructions and Information: Referral/Review of Existing Evaluation
 - Data/Consent Form
 - MET
- **IEP Related forms and information**
 - IEPT Form
 - IEPT Instructions
 - Modifications/Accommodations/Supports List
 - Extended School Year Consideration
 - Instructional Setting
 - Key Components of a Present Level Statement
 - Sample Present Level Statements
 - IEP Amendment
 - Guidance for Amendments to the IEP
- **Annual Goals/instructional Objectives/Grade Level Content Expectations**
 - Annual Goals 1
 - Annual Goals 2
 - Progress Report 1
 - ELA GLCE Progress Report
 - ELA GLCE
 - Math GLCE Progress Report
 - Math GLCE
 - MI-Access Functional Independence ELA Extended GLCE – Progress Report

- MI-Access Functional Independence ELA Extended GLCE
- MI-Access Functional Independence ELA Extended Math – Progress Report
- MI-Access Functional Independence Math Extended CLCE

- **Secondary Transition**
 - Transition Plan Attachment
 - Transition Plan attachment Instructions
 - Summary of Performance
 - Consent to Invite Agency Representative

- **Early Childhood**
 - Documentation of Individualized Family Service Plan Transition
 - Documentation of Ineligibility for Early On
 - Individualized Family Service Transition Plan

- **Non-Public Schools**
 - Nonpublic Service Plan
 - Nonpublic service Plan Instructions
 - Notice of Provision of Nonpublic Services

- **Discipline forms and Information**
 - Wayne RESA Discipline Procedures
 - Discipline Tracking Record
 - Discipline Services Record
 - Discipline Services Log
 - Notice of change of Placement
 - Manifestation Determination Review
 - Manifestation Determination Review Instructions
 - Interim Alternative Education Setting
 - Interim alternative Education Setting Instructions

- **Miscellaneous Forms**
 - Transportation Services
 - Previous Enrollment
 - Due Process Hearing Request
 - Records Request

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM
(SIS and Special Education Records and IEP Development)

It is the Consultant Team's understanding that the EAA is in the process of conducting a RFP for a Student Information System (SIS) with the express purpose for the collection and reporting of student data and information. To ensure that all required federal and state data is accurately collected and reported, in a timely manner, it is of critical importance that the selected system has a robust special education component that can easily "communicate" with all aspects of the general education information system. These aspects include, but are not limited to, the general student information files, budget and finance, personnel, instruction, assessment, etc.

Federal and state funding, including Medicaid reimbursements, for the EAA, will be based on the data collected and submitted via the newly adopted SIS System. Since this is one of the funding sources the necessary to sustain the EAA's special education program, the decision on which system is to be selected is of vital importance.

While the Consultant Team has not been asked for their recommendation, as to which SIS System the EAA will be ultimately select, they do want to bring to the attention of the appropriate staff, that the Wayne RESA does have a SIS System that can be immediately put in use by the EAA. The Wayne RESA System meets all federal and state reporting requirements. The EAA system will need to interface with the Wayne RESA as the distribution of the EAA's federal and state special education funding are disseminated via the Wayne RESA. It should also be noted, that the Wayne RESA system is the present SIS system used by the Detroit Public Schools. Since it is assumed, that many of the Detroit staff will ultimately be employed by the EAA, if the Wayne RESA is used, they would have some familiarity with the system.

It is also important that the selected system should not only have the appropriate data collecting and reporting capabilities, but also include an electronic IEP and forms components, and an instructional/curriculum and student assessment/monitoring interface.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/SURROGATES

Educational research findings overwhelmingly indicate that students have more opportunities for success when parents and guardians are involved and engaged in their education. Therefore, it is of utmost importance, to create a school environment where parents/guardians are welcome, valued, respected, and acknowledged as partners in their child's education.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA encourage and support parent/guardian interaction and participation in all educational aspects of their child's education, as appropriate.
- The EAA maintain a list of available surrogate parents and provide necessary training as mandated.
- THE EAA utilize and distribute the special education parent handbook, developed (in revision) by RESA.
- The EAA form a parent advisory group that includes a specific subgroup for parents/guardians of students with disabilities that meets on a regular basis with the support and involvement of all pertinent EAA staff (NOTE: It is suggested that students participate and be included, as appropriate.)
- The EAA include parents/guardians of students with disabilities in appropriate district and/or Wayne RESA offered trainings in such areas as parent's rights, student learning strategies, homework support, etc.
- The EAA collaborate with the Parent Resource Network and Wayne RESA in providing parent/guardian opportunities for training.
- THE EAA communicate to parents/guardians their high expectations for their students by such activities as workshops, school class visitations, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- The EAA explore parent support for services outside the scope of education, much like the Harlem Villages Project, and work with hospitals, foundations, businesses, and agencies to provide services and supports to families.
- The EAA shall provide, with the assistance of Wayne RESA the mandated training for surrogates to support as needed the education of students with disabilities.

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

It is widely acknowledged of the importance of well trained teachers in guiding and teaching students so as they will have the opportunity to achieve to their full potential. This is imperative for all students including students with disabilities. In regards to highly qualified teachers, Michigan as other states, have defined the criteria for the designation of highly qualified in accordance with federal and state mandates.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA develop a systematic process for recruiting highly quality personnel with skills specific to those critical areas of need in special education as mandated in current legislation.
- The EAA form relationships and partnerships with local university and college schools of education to ensure that their students are appropriately trained in Best Practices to meet the needs of the students with disabilities served by the EAA.
- The EAA, in cooperation with local university and college schools of education, provide student teaching training opportunities on selected school sites.
- The EAA, consider offering a teacher internship program as an alternative traditional training programs for potential teacher.
- The EAA should consider contracting with specific professional service providers for the delivery of related services (e.g. OT; PT; Speech/Language), as needed.
- The EAA develop a process, collaborating with RESA, for contracting for service providers, to provide related services [i.e. speech and language, occupational and physical therapy, etc.] as needed.
- The EAA, collaborate with outside agencies for placement of interns in such areas as psychological services, social work, occupational and physical therapy, and recreation.

FINANCE, FUNDING & BUDGET

Special education and related services are both federally mandated and regulated but are not sufficiently funded to cover all costs. Since state support is also limited, there is a special education funding shortfall that greatly impacts the general education budget. Unfortunately, most often, this is a reality and its implication must be taken seriously in district wide yearly budget planning. (Note: The Michigan Department of Education has federal funds available for discretionary purposes. These funds are set aside to fund high cost placements and other events that impact adversely on both district general and special education budgets. At this time, the fund is estimated to be approximately \$40, 000. 000.)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA formally request, of the Michigan State Department of Education, any Federally discretionary funding that they may be entitled to.
- The EAA determine, in collaboration with RESA, its special education revenue streams and baseline allocations.
- The EAA establish an oversight process to ensure that the collection of available federal and state special education revenues are maximized.
- The EAA establish an accounting, reporting, and collection process to ensure that Medicaid reimbursements are maximized.
- The EAA develop a special education budget based on identified special education program and related services costs for the 2011 – 2012 school year.
- The EAA identify funding sources, for any special education budget projected shortfall.
- The EAA determine the need and budget for funding of any non-public school costs, due process, and possible settlement costs from legal proceedings.
- The EAA annually audit special education funding streams (IDEA, ACT3, etc.) to assure these funds are being appropriately expended.
- The EAA put in place cost containment practices, as possible and appropriate, for expenditures necessary to deliver special education programs and related services in compliance with legal mandates and sound educational practice.
- The EAA actively pursue and lobby for both additional federal and state funding to cover special education program and related services expenses.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

It is important to create and nurture partnerships with businesses, local associations, municipal governments, community organizations, etc. as they can play a very important role in assisting in an appreciation, understanding, and support when undertaking a Reform Effort such as EAA that will ultimately impact every aspect of the community at large.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- The EAA develop multiple strategies to communicate its vision and mission to educate all students with disabilities and publicize its needs, good news, and accomplishments.
- The EAA Chancellor actively collaborate with and pursue faith-based, community and business partnerships for all aspects of the EAA including public opinion, training and employment student opportunities, school volunteers, special education and financial support.
- The EAA identify community programs for students with disabilities for involvement such as the Special Olympics, Parks and Reaction Programs, Workshops, etc.
- The EAA work with groups such as civic organizations such, the Chamber of Commerce, faith based groups, local businesses, foundations, and community organizations to bring time, talent, and resources for the students of the EAA.
- The EAA consider business and community partners not only at the central office level but ++for each school also at each school site.